

# 1 Introduction

This 2008 Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) serves as the policy guide and framework for future growth and development in Garrett County. The Plan looks at land use, water resources (including drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater), transportation, public facilities (including police, fire and emergency services, schools, and libraries), economic development, housing, environmentally sensitive areas, and mineral resources, and other natural resources. The Plan also includes a detailed plan for the area around Deep Creek Lake.

The Plan's "horizon" is the year 2030, meaning that the Plan looks at growth and development out over the next 20 years or so. However, under state law, the County must review the Plan at least every six years. The next review should begin in 2014, and may result in adjustments to the policies in this Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan replaces the last County Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 1995 and reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2001. Each chapter of this 2008 Plan contains goals and objectives, a review of background and trends, discussion of issues, and recommended policies and actions.

## 1.1 Legal Requirements

This Plan has been prepared pursuant to State enabling legislation and the requirements for Maryland counties contained in Article 66-B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Under Article 66-B, among other requirements, the Plan must implement the following land use visions for Maryland's future<sup>1</sup>:

1. Development is concentrated in suitable areas;
2. Sensitive areas are protected;
3. In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected;
4. Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic;
5. Conservation of resources, including a reduction in resource consumption, is practiced;
6. To assure the achievement of the above, economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined;
7. Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under control of the county or municipal corporation are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur; and
8. Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

Article 66-B was amended in 2006 to include several new requirements for Comprehensive Plans, including a new water resources element. This Plan has been prepared to meet these requirements.

The Plan has also been prepared consistent with and in consideration of ongoing efforts in Maryland in support of smart growth.

## 1.2 The Plan's Relationship with the Towns in Garrett County

Garrett County contains the incorporated towns of Accident, Deer Park, Friendsville, Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Loch Lynn Heights, Mountain Lake Park, and Oakland. Under state law, the towns have their own planning authority and adopt their own comprehensive plans

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<sup>1</sup> First adopted in 1992 in the Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act, and amended in 2000.

and land use regulations. In that sense the County Plan does not apply to the towns. However, interjurisdictional coordination is a feature of planning in Maryland, and has been practiced in Garrett County for many years. The County coordinated the development of this 2008 Plan with the towns, most of whom expect to complete an update of their own comprehensive plans by 2009. The 2006 amendments to Article 66-B require coordination between the towns and the County over the municipal growth elements of those individual comprehensive plans.

### **1.3 Plan Preparation**

Pursuant to Article 66-B, the Plan was prepared for the Garrett County Commissioners by the Garrett County Planning Commission. The Planning Commission was assisted by staff from the Garrett County Planning and Land Development Office and several other County agencies (see acknowledgements). The Plan was prepared between June 2006 and April 2008, recommended for approval by the Planning Commission October 1, 2008, and adopted by the County Commissioners on October 7, 2008.

Preparation of the Plan included an extensive amount of public outreach, input, and participation. More detail on how the plan was prepared including public meetings is provided in the Appendix.

### **1.4 Note on Plan Content and Appendix**

A large volume of data and information was used to prepare this Plan. To keep the Plan to a manageable length and size, the main text contains the key points, data, maps, figures, conclusions, policies and recommendations. Supporting documents, reports, data and memoranda are in the appendix to this plan which is available in electronic format on the Garrett County website: <http://www.garrettcountry.org/>, or from the Garrett County Planning and Land Development Office, which also has paper copies.